



DRAFT
8-25-10 Meeting Notes
Information Sharing & Coordination Work Group
(Smart Planning Task Force Established under SF2389)

11:30 AM
Rebuild Iowa Office, Conference Room 2
Wallace Building
502 E. Ninth Street, 2nd Floor
Des Moines, IA 50319

Attendees (* indicates telephonic participation)

Don Temeyer, HR Green, Chair
Susan Judkins Josten, Rebuild Iowa Office
Annette Mansheim, Rebuild Iowa Office
Aaron Todd, Rebuild Iowa Office
Heather Hackbarth, Department of Management
Eric Abrams, IDOT
Les Beck, Linn County Planning Director*
Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG*
Francis Boggus, Great Places/Department of Cultural Affairs
Amy Bouska, IDALS
Mickey Carlson, TownCraft/Iowa Finance Authority
Keith Denner, PPM
Bill Ehm, DNR
Bill Freeland, House Democratic Caucus Staff
Ron Gaines, City of Cedar Falls
LaVon Griffieon, 1000 Friends of Iowa
Pam Jochum, State Senator from Dubuque
Theresa Kehoe, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff
Deb Kozel, Legislative Services Agency
Witold Krajewski, Iowa Flood Center*
Linda Leto, Department of Management
Mary Beth Mellick, Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC)
Jace Mikels, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff
Joe Mowers, Iowa Workforce Development
Heather Nelson, Office of Energy Independence
Dennis Plautz, City Development Board
Duane Sand, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
Ken Sharp, Iowa Department of Public Health
Kirk Siegle, Southeast Iowa
Gary Taylor, ISU Extension*

- I. Don Temeyer, chair, welcomed the group and led introductions.
- II. The Meeting Notes from the 7/28/10 work group meeting were approved.
- III. Aaron Todd, Rebuild Iowa Office, reviewed the public input process for the Smart Planning Task Force Recommendation.
- IV. **Review of Regional Planning Framework.** Les Beck, Linn County Planning and Development Director and Chair of Workgroup C, reviewed a planning framework “org chart” for coordination of planning efforts. His framework included a sheet that outlined how the process worked prior to passage of legislation, how it works with the legislation, and how it could work with future recommendations and legislation. Two coordination plans were discussed; Plan A would create a new state agency to certify local plans and coordinate planning in general; Plan B would establish a public/private partnership involving the Iowa League of Cities, ISAC, colleges, and planning groups to develop models or templates to be housed in a new or existing agency. Don Temeyer indicated he liked the chart; he is a proponent of local decision making but knows that planning needs coordination.

Les Beck said there has been much discussion about should review local plans; the region or the state? For information purposes, the group was reminded that Wisconsin reviews at the regional level but collects data at the state level. Kevin Blanshan said the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), a function that INRCOG serves in his area, have a transportation focus; we need the right entity for oversight so must be careful about assigning to an agency or combination of agencies. Don Temeyer asked if IDED is the best place for coordination. Mickey Carlson stated her opinion that IDED is the best prepared for this among existing agencies, except perhaps RIO. Francis Boggus agreed based on his experience with Great Places. Kevin said IDED isn't right from a transportation standpoint, so the DOT will still need to have a role. Les Beck said IDALS had been mentioned because of their work in ag protection, stormwater runoff, and environmental protection.

Don Temeyer asked the group's opinion about a new agency. Aaron Todd said some other states have chosen this route, while others have not. Lavon Griffieon said if we really want to make a difference with planning in the state, it would need to be done with a new agency. It could have been funded with what's been spend on flooding! She thinks other cost savings would result, and we have a treasure of ag land but view ag as only the best use until another “higher” use comes along.

- V. **Geographic Information Office Discussion.** Eric Abrams of the DOT reviewed the memo he had distributed regarding this topic. He said it really doesn't matter where the office “lives,” and it could be within a state agency, university or even an organization like ISAC if they wanted to devote resources to it. He said the proposal suggests a state agency since that is thought to be the best chance to be successful. Mickey Carlson aside how this proposal would affect the work being done by the state library and the ISU state clearinghouse to collect data. Eric said it's hard to answer that, but it would save time and other resources. It should be a multi-phased approach. Kevin encouraged getting input from the DOT and other MPOs. Don Temeyer said we can't change existing rules and procedures, so the framework should recognize that a planning document may need to go to several places for authorization and appropriation.

- VI. **Watershed Planning from the DNR Perspective.** Bill Ehm of the DNR distributed three brochures on watershed planning. The process focuses on goals, inventory, investigation, implement. The DNR is a heavy user of GIS. There are currently about 60 watershed projects in the state. More are about 20,000 acres, but the largest is a 350,000 acre project in the Rathbun watershed. You need a core group of people in a watershed working on an ongoing basis for success. The DNR and watersheds would benefit from a Geographic Information Office. Projects such as the current disaster at Lake Delhi involve contacting hundreds of property owners and that process could be easier with a GIO. LiDAR data is compatible with GIS.
- VII. **Office of Energy Independence State Plan Summary.** Rob Grayson of OEI described highlights of the plan as they relate to planning considerations in the state. The state plan has a goal of 30% reduction of energy use for facilities. Reduction of gasoline usage is also a goal that can be aided by planning. Keith Denner suggests a requirement that landlords and property owners must disclose energy usage prior to renting or selling a unit.
- VIII. **Watershed Planning from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and Soil and Water Perspective.** Duane Sand of the INHF said his organization has a specific interest in three of the Smart Planning Principles: natural resources, strong sense of place, and green infrastructure. The need for coordination is so obvious, yet so difficult. Many task forces have made it a top priority for fifteen years. Why hasn't it been accomplished? Duane's experience in writing grants and reviewing proposals says the following are some reasons it is difficult:
- A lack of focus and political buy-in. It can be difficult to find issues that bring people together. Right now, it's flooding. Sometimes it can be a desire for safe drinking water, or recreation amenities.
 - Need for targeted resources. A lack of this causes planning to be viewed as dysfunctional since it doesn't produce desired results.
 - Sometimes important stakeholders are missing.
 - Authorities may exceed their capacities.
 - People wish for an existing program to meet their need when it's hard to make it "fit."
 - Working in silos causes programs to fail to deliver expected results which causes frustration.
- Duane is skeptical that any opportunity exists at the state level for coordination of watershed planning given the lack of prior success. It's hard enough at the local level, but these problems multiply when it becomes regional. There is a need to plan at the HUC-8 level and implement at the HUC-12 level. A current project that may test this is the Raccoon Watershed. And, Duane is excited by Watershed Management Authority language in HF2459, which makes it a priority to incentivize this type of planning. Recent flooding has occurred in large university cities, which are less afraid of government and willing to invest in their futures. Drinking water protection is a value in Cedar Rapids and Des Moines, while water quantity is of interest in Northwest Iowa and Southern Iowa.
- IX. **Iowa Flood Center**. Witold Krajewski explained that the Iowa Flood Center is an academic research center with the main idea to engage expertise of the U of I and ISU to address flooding. They are obtaining better information for Iowans to be prepared to address flood problems. Three major activities include 1) flood inundation maps; 2) technology for monitoring flooding (rainfall, soil moisture, stream flow); and 3) special structure of watersheds (see boundaries on the Iowa Flood Center Web site,

<http://www.iowafloodcenter.org/>. Don Temeyer encouraged that these tiers of information be available to GIS users.

- X. **Savings from Coordinated Planning.** Gary Taylor from ISU Extension discussed ways that planning coordination can result in cost savings. He said having some data available in one place is ideal, such as census data. Many other types of information are stored locally and not all can be centralized. Centralizing collection and distribution of land information would be helpful. Iowa is challenged to easily obtain parcel data. Some communities aren't using GIS data at all. Capacity may need to be built at COGs for this type of data collection. We will realize better outcomes if we do a base level analysis at a centralized location. We need benchmarks for achieving smart planning, then centralize the input and evaluation components of the planning process. It's probably not possible to regulate prices charged for data availability, but making it standardized with reduce second-order charging.

- XI. **Agricultural Community View of Planning.** Lavon Griffieon said it's unfortunate that Farm u is not at the table today (they were invited). They have a corporate document that says planning is good and prevents the need to a city to grow their borders prematurely. She recommends considering paying for permanent easements, emphasizing identification of state resources to match a federal program. Iowa has 10-25% of the best soils in the world, but less than 1% of the farmland. This is a valuable resource to retain. We have a situation where farm ownership is transferring to absentees (approximately 47% of Iowa farmland is rented) and renters don't invest in conservation practices. Kirk Siegle from the Iowa Corn Growers said he agrees with the comments about ownership transition, and that it should be up to owners to invest but they're absent.

LaVon commented that annexation laws are outdated in Iowa, but Dennis Plautz of the City Development Board said it's a misconception that cities are creating urban sprawl when they annex. He said when property values around cities increase, there is interest in purchasing land for development purposes. A county competes with the city for development because they want to collect a levy that they can't collect on city properties. If a property stays in the county vs. the city limits, it is built to a rural standard and doesn't benefit from urban planning. When it is brought into the city, significant cost is incurred to upgrade the facilities. We need to control urban sprawl at the county level first so cities don't have to annex to protect themselves. LaVon agreed. She described the process of "development by church" that occurred in the Ankeny area. Dennis said many farmers don't like zoning, but maybe they should to protect against urbanization.

- XII. **Watershed Planning in Urban Areas.** Amy Bouska from IDALS' Division of Soil and Conservation Service shared a power point which is available at http://www.rio.iowa.gov/smart_planning/meetings.html. Iowa's land use has changed significantly from the mid-1800's until today. Although it is still dominated by agriculture, urban and developed areas have an increasing impact. The removal of prairie plants with deep roots has caused ag land to lose 60-80% of its ability to hold water. Streams have been straightened and we have developed in our floodplains. Any successful watershed planning efforts have grassroots involvement. Urban areas should consider green infrastructure vs. gray infrastructure (concrete). Johnson County recently passed a \$20 Million bond issue to set aside green infrastructure in the county.

In Iowa, 94% of storms involve under 1" of rainfall. A typical urban lot sheds 4,000 gallons of water in a 1" rain. Green roofs, rain barrels, rain gardens, permeable pavement, native landscaping, and soil quality restoration are all ways to help hold water where it falls. She

recommends visiting <http://www.iowasudas.org> for information on state funding, regional watershed coordinators and low interest loans. Dennis Plautz said he liked giving incentives to property owners to hold water, reducing the need to pay stormwater fees.

- XIII. **Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission Recommendation #8.** Susan Judkins of RIO provided a brief review of Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission Recommendation #8, Regional Planning, available at http://www.rio.iowa.gov/smart_planning/assets/2010-08-25_RIAC_Recommendation_8_Planning.pdf.
- XIV. **Upcoming Meetings.** Aaron Todd of RIO discussed the timeline for recommendations, including that they will be reviewed by the full task force on September 15, 2010. Workgroup B elected to meet again on September 8th to finalize their recommendations. It appears these will include recommending establishing a state Geographic Information Office; and identifying a centralized location for planning coordination, either a new agency or housed within an existing agency. Duane Sand suggested that the group consider requiring cities and counties to comply with smart planning to receive aid instead of providing costly technical assistance; in other words, have the communities pay for it themselves if they want state support. Kevin Blanshan wants to be sure the group considers coordination among several agencies. Pam Jochum suggests a recognition that there will be costs associated with any recommendations, so we should identify the most efficient way that actually accomplishes the goal. Don Temeyer said maybe planning and recover go together in an agency like RIO. Eric Abrams said HSEMD could be a place to store data, but planning coordination may be different.

All workgroup members were urged to submit their recommendations in the template form, available here http://www.rio.iowa.gov/smart_planning/assets/2010-06-23_committee_report_template.pdf. This link will be forwarded to workgroup members.

- XV. The meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.